

**DAVID R. CRAIG**  
HARFORD COUNTY EXECUTIVE

**LORRAINE T. COSTELLO**  
DIRECTOR OF ADMINISTRATION



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**CONTACT: Robert B. Thomas, Jr., 410-638-3258**

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## **HARFORD COUNTY KICKS OFF CAPITAL CAMPAIGN FOR YMCA IN ABINGDON**

(Bel Air, MD -

October 28, 2008) - - A \$150,000 grant from Harford County Government today helps the Y of Central Maryland officially launch their \$3.5 million capital campaign to build an aquatics center at the Walter and Betty Ward Family Center Y in Abingdon. The \$150,000 grant, part of a total commitment of \$300,000 from Harford County, along with a \$500,000 matching grant from an anonymous donor, helps move the fund drive towards the \$3.5 million goal.

The aquatics center campaign is chaired by Melinda Craig, wife of the County Executive David R. Craig, and David Worrell, a local businessman.

County Executive Craig presented a symbolic check to John K. Hoey, Y of Central Maryland, President and CEO during the brief ceremony at the Walter and Betty Ward Family Center Y in Abingdon.

The Y in Abingdon officially opened in 2007 as a state-of-the-art, family health and wellness facility, creating an anchor for Y services delivered to the citizens of Harford County since 1986. The center was named for Walter and Betty Ward in honor of their generous lead gift which made the center possible.

"This is a proud day for Harford County and we are pleased to partner with an outstanding nonprofit organization such as the Y of Central Maryland to help bring an affordable aquatics program to southern Harford County." remarked County Executive Craig.

The 30,000 square foot Y in Abingdon, provides family-oriented, affordable, quality programs to thousands of Harford County families. Among the amenities of the facility are a large gymnasium, fitness center, child watch services, multi-purpose area, community meeting room, a climbing wall and locker rooms.

More than 80% of the population of Harford County resides within 10 miles of water. Unfortunately, classes that provide life saving swimming and conditioning programs for youth, adults and seniors are not accessible to most residents. In order to meet this growing need, Harford County Government and the Y of Central Maryland are launching a capital campaign to construct an aquatics complex for the Y in Abingdon.

The proposed design includes a six lane, 25 meter long pool and a therapy pool. Both pools will be accessible for swimmers with special needs.

Additionally, the aquatics center will offer recreational programs for all ages and abilities to include lessons, exercise programs, competitive swim programs and physical therapy and rehabilitation programs offered in partnership with the Upper Chesapeake Medical Center Sports and Rehabilitation Clinic.

Commenting on the support received from Harford County, John K. Hoey, President and CEO of the Y of Central Maryland stated, "We are tremendously grateful to County Executive Craig for his leadership to help bring about a much needed community asset - a state-of-the-art aquatics center. The gift from Harford County gives us a great start toward building the center and will enable the Y to teach critical water safety skills, and bring enjoyment to thousands of Harford County residents," Hoey added.